

The Implementation of Types of Seating Arrangement to Enhance Students' Participation in English Class

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Abstract

Classroom management refers to the process where a teacher organizes and controls student movement, behavior and interaction pattern during a lesson so that teaching and learning process can run well and the students can understand what the teacher transmits. The objectives of the study are:

1. To describe classroom activities to enhance the students' participation
2. To describe types of seating arrangement that are implemented in the classroom and its effect on students
3. To describe students' responses toward the teacher's classroom management in enhancing their participation

The research is descriptive qualitative. This study was conducted in SMPN 1 Tuban. The subjects of the study were the English teacher and the students in English class at 7-A grade first semester academic year 2017/2018. The data were obtained from field note, observation, and interview.

Based on the analysis, the researchers found that the English teacher had applied four instructional strategies and seven classroom activities on three types of seating arrangements to enhance the students' participation in English class. Whole-class strategies: lecture, working as individual: individual task were applied on traditional seating arrangement. Small-group strategies: project groupings, discussion, presentation, working in pairs: student partnerships were conducted on modular seating arrangement. And working as individual: retelling written information was applied on horseshoe arrangement.

The students felt comfortable with the change of classroom activities and seating arrangements and they became more active to participate.

From the findings above, it could be concluded that the teacher could enhance the students' participation in English class by implementing various classroom activities on various types of seating arrangement.

Keywords: Classroom management, Classroom activity, Seating arrangement, Students' participation.

1. Introduction

Teaching English as a Foreign Language is very challenging, especially to the young

learners. Learning English in early ages has advantages from both biological and psychological point of view. Based on those advantages, Indonesian government through 1994's Primary School Curriculum has introduced English as "local content", starting from grade four at primary school. So that, it requires the teachers to have excellent classroom management skills to ensure successful learning.

No language can be taught effectively by focusing only on the methodology and ignoring the issues pertaining to classroom management. Management refers to skill in the organization and presentation of lessons in such a way that all pupils are actively engaged in learning. This requires an ability to analyse the different elements and phases of a lesson, to select and deliver appropriate material and to reduce sources of friction (Smith and Laslett, 2002: viii). Generally, classroom management refers to the process where a teacher organizes and controls student movement, behavior and interaction pattern during a lesson.

A teacher's most important job in the classroom is to create the conditions in which effective learning can take place. To make a course effective, the teacher must have the skills of managing the class successfully. It can be done through teacher's positive attitude, intentions, personality and a healthy relationship with the students. It also requires certain organizational skills (task organization, lesson organization, and technique. All these things together can be called classroom management.

Classroom management includes grouping and seating, setting up activities, time management, teacher's control over students in the classroom, proper start and end of the

lesson, maintaining discipline, dealing with problems, using proper tools and techniques, giving instructions, monitoring, etc. It is essentials for language classroom.

In a language classroom, teachers need to ensure students' involvement and comfort. If the students are not encouraged and do not feel comfortable in the classroom, it becomes very difficult to the teacher to teach and involve the students in classroom activities. In implementing the classroom activities, the teacher also has to give explicit instructions, because students do not automatically realize what the teacher expects. After the students get what the teacher expects well, they will need less direction in future applications. Thus, classroom management is necessary in order to create a suitable learning environment and encourage the learners to learn the language.

Organization of space also affects the way students behave and move around the classroom, as well as how much attention they pay to instruction (McLeod, Fisher, and Hoover, 2003: 3). The researchers' focus in this study is the teacher's implementation of seating arrangement in English class which is one of the most important aspects of classroom management. Seating arrangement can be associated with the other aspects of classroom management such as instruction, classroom interaction, forming groups, monitoring, maintaining discipline, etc.

If the seating arrangement in a classroom is not set up properly, it may affect the other aspects of classroom as well. It also becomes difficult to grab learner's attention if the seating arrangement is not proper. Although arrangements will vary according to the type of lesson, age of pupils and nature of activity, it is important that initially teachers decide where children should sit. A seating plan showing who sits where quickly enables teachers to learn and use individual names, so although later re-grouping will be desirable, it is very useful for at least the first few lessons if a fixed pattern is set and maintained (Smith and Laslett, 2002: 4).

As a common, traditional orderly rows arrangement (for classroom typically consists of about five or six perfectly straight rows, each containing five to seven chairs equidistant from each other) is predominate in most educational settings, particularly in college and upper elementary through high school settings. The cause of this dominance is elusive, but tradition is the explanation offered most frequently. If seating is discussed at all in a teaching method course, the traditional arrangement is virtually always attacked as less desirable than other alternatives because it inhibits experimentation in the classroom, minimizes student-student interaction and puts the teacher as the primary focus, whereas

horseshoe arrangement would be the best if both student-student and student-teacher interaction are important to the learning in the class.

With horseshoe and circle seating, the classroom is more intimate place and the potential for students to share feelings and information through talking, eye contact, or expressive body movements (eyebrow-raising, shoulder-shrugging, etc) is far greater than they are sitting in rows, one behind the other (Harmer, 2012: 163). Classes such as those concerned with higher-order cognitive or affective goals, particularly where there are few “right” or “wrong” answers, would be benefitted most by this arrangement (McCorskey and McVetta, 1978).

In previous research that the researchers had got from another country entitled “classroom management: seating arrangements ESL classrooms” by Safa Zerín (2009) in BRAC University Dhaka proposed that in language classroom, seating arrangement is important to create a positive learning environment. There are different types of seating arrangement for different types of classroom. All types of seating arrangement have some positive and negative sides. All of them are not suitable for all classes. Some are good for some classroom contexts whereas some are not.

While the previous research from the researchers’ university entitled “the English teacher’s classroom management on the teaching learning process of teaching speaking at SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Bancar” by Jumali (2012) that observed about English teacher’s classroom management especially teacher’s instructions, showed that a teacher has to give the students instructions as simple as possible and checks their understanding about the instructions, in whilts teaching, a teacher usually uses English and Indonesian to make the students easier and understand about the material and what the teacher expects.

The first previous study had already discussed about seating arrangement but in abroad, not in Indonesia. While the second previous study had not discussed about seating arrangement yet, so here the researchers wanted to fulfil some parts that had not been discussed and completed in the previous researches yet.

This research took place in SMPN 1 TUBAN. To collect the data, the researchers used some methods, they were field note, observation, and interview. The data were analyzed descriptively. So, the researchers had chosen the research entitled “**the implementation of types of seating arrangement to enhance students’ participation in English class**”.

2. Review of Literature

a. Seating Arrangement

It is about the way the teacher sets the students' seating model. Seating arrangement is one of the most important parts of floor space. Ming-Tak and Li Wai-Shing believed that a good seating arrangement is one which facilitates specific learning tasks and activities and communicates a teacher's beliefs about learning and teaching (2008, cited in Zerlin, 2009: 5).

b. Types of Seating Arrangement

Harmer (2012: 162, 163) proposed four types of seating arrangement most common. They are:

1) Traditional Arrangement (Orderly Rows)

Orderly rows for classrooms typically consists of about five or six perfectly straight rows, each containing five to seven chairs equidistant from each other. Students work as a whole group.

Harmer (2012: 162) proposed that there are considerable advantages to orderly row seating. The teacher has a clear view of all the students and the students can all see the teacher. Lecturing is easier with such a seating arrangement since it enables the teacher to maintain eye contact with the people he or she is talking to. Orderly rows allow the teacher to work with the whole class. It is also useful when students are involved in certain kinds of language practice. If all the students are focused on a task at the same time, the whole class gets the same message. It is often easier to create a good whole-class dynamic when students are sitting as one group - rather than many - in orderly rows (Harmer, 2012: 162).

So, if the purpose of the class is primarily one of information dissemination, the traditional arrangement is probably best because it minimizes student-student interaction and places the primary interaction focus in the classroom on the teacher.

2) Horseshoe Arrangement

The horseshoe or semi-circular arrangement is frequently employed in smaller groups, such as seminars. Some rooms are not physically conducive to this arrangement for larger classes because of the "dead space" in the middle.

This arrangement would be the best if both student-student and student-teacher interaction are important to the learning in the class.

Classes such as those concerned with higher-order cognitive or affective goals, particularly where there are few “right” or “wrong” answers, would be benefitted most by this arrangement.

3) **Circle Arrangement**

Harmer (2012: 163) believes that classes which are arranged in a circle make quite a strong statement about what the teacher and the students believe in. With all the people in the room sitting in a circle, there is a far greater feeling of equality than when the teacher stays out at the front.

With horseshoe and circle seating, the classroom is more intimate place and the potential for students to share feelings and information through talking, eye contact, or expressive body movements (eyebrow-raising, shoulder-shrugging, etc) is far greater than they are sitting in rows, one behind the other (Harmer, 2012: 163).

4) **Modular Arrangement (Separate Tables)**

Harmer (2012: 163) proposes that in some classrooms students sit in groups at separate tables, whether they are working as a whole class, in groups or in pairs. In such classroom, you may see the teacher walking around checking the students’ work and helping out if they are having difficulties – prompting the students at this table, or explaining something to the students at that table in the corner.

A huge advantage of separate tables is that groupwork is easy to arrange (Harmer, 2012: 163). This seating arrangement is the most common groupwork seating than other kinds of seating. Separate table seating is especially useful in mixed-ability classes, where different groups of students can benefit from concentrating on different tasks (Harmer, 2012: 163).

It is advocated for classes in which student-student interaction is most important. If task groups are formed in the class, this arrangement permits maximum interaction among those groups while minimizing the interference of one group with another.

c. Types of Instructional Strategies

It is about strategies that the teacher does in teaching and learning process. Ginny Hoover (2003: 126) stated that strategies are categorized according to the number of participants involved-whole class, small group, pairs, and individuals.

1) Whole-Class Strategies

When people think of teaching and learning, they frequently conjure up a picture of students sitting in rows listening to a teacher who stands in front of them. For many, this is what teaching means, and it is still the most common teacher- student interaction in many cultures (Harmer 2012: 161).

The advantages of presenting instruction to the whole class are attractive to many teachers. Whole-class strategies generally require less preparation time and instruction time. Typical whole-class strategies include lecture, discussion, debate, teacher demonstrations, and providing directions (Hoover, 2003: 127).

2) Small-Group Strategies

There are many benefits derived from working together to achieve goals, such as completing a multitask project, learning a defined body of information, and sharing the work in researching a topic. Group work is time-consuming, requires excellent classroom management skills, and entails the challenge of obtaining a quality effort from each team member. Yet in the small-group setting students have a greater opportunity for participation and the possibility of increased learning and retention.

3) Working in Pairs

The interaction with the greatest opportunity to learn comes when working with pairs. Students can be paired in several ways: by unequal ability, by knowledge or talents, or at random. Students working in pairs have an opportunity for input from a peer without the need for the higher-level social skills required in small groups. For those who have a trust issue with adults, pairing provides an opportunity to learn without those issues interfering with the acquisition of knowledge or skills.

4) Working as Individual

With this strategy, the individual works alone to learn, practice a skill, and show proof of learning. The advantages are that the work can be individualized to fit the needs of the student without too much difficulty, and the pace in which the student learns can be adjusted with ease. In the traditional classroom, it was common to see the teacher at the front of the room providing instruction and then assigning seatwork to be completed individually by the students. That type of learning still exists along with a wide variety of other strategies for working as an individual to learn and assess.

3. Research Method

The researchers used descriptive qualitative because research in all fields of study focuses on finding and validating new ways to investigate and understand reality. This study has been conducted in SMPN 1 Tuban. The subject of the study were the English teacher and the students in English class at 7-A grade first semester academic year 2017/2018. This class consisted of 11 male and 21 female students.

The researchers used some techniques in conducting this research, they were field note, the researcher has written down what kind of activities that the teacher implemented in the classroom, how the teacher instructed the students and handled the classroom. The second was observation. This research used non participant observation because the researcher did not take part in teaching and learning process. The observation sheet consisted of four items. First item was about classroom activities that the teacher implemented in the classroom that were divided into four parts according to Hoover (2003), they were whole-class strategies, small-group strategies, working in pairs, and working as individual. The second item was about the most common types of seating arrangement according to Harmer (2012), they were traditional seating arrangement (orderly rows), hoerseshoe arrangement, circle seating arrangement, and modular arrangement (separate tables). The third item was about interaction that hapened in the classroom between teacher-students, student-student, and among group. The other item was about students' participation in the classroom. The third instrument was interview sheet, it contained eightteen (18) questions. They were about, the students' background on seating arrangement in previous classroom (Elementary School), the second was a question whether the students have had varios seating arrangements in previous classroom or not, and the third was about both classroom activities and seating arrangements in their new classroom (Junior High School), also what they feel toward those and the reasons. In conducting interview the researcher chose 24 students randomly from the class as representatives. She used *Round Table (Sarasehan)* interview technique. The researcher chose the representatives of interview based on Slovin's formula. The result or all the data had been analyzed descriptively. The researcher conducted this research in two meetings and intrview in the last meeting.

4. Finding and Discussion

The researchers described and discussed the data from the twice meetings of this research as follows:

a. The Classroom Activities to Enhance the Students' Participation

There were seven classroom activities that the teacher applied in English classroom in twice meetings:

1) **Lecture (Whole-Class Strategies)**

The teacher explained material about the lesson to the students.

2) **Project Groupings (Small-Group Strategies)**

The students were divided into several small groups, changed their seating arrangement into modular arrangement or separate table, then the teacher gave them a task.

3) **Group Discussion (Small-Group Strategies)**

The students discussed the task with their partners in group.

4) **Presentation (Small-Group Strategies)**

The students presented the result of the group discussion.

5) **Student Partnerships (Working in Pairs)**

The students interviewed their deskmates about the topic of the lesson.

6) **Individual Task (Working as Individual)**

The students retelled the information that they gained from interview in written form.

7) **Having monologue (Working as Individual)**

After the students made written form of retelling story, they had to deliver it in front of the class loudly without looking any note.

From the research finding above, the researchers concluded that the English teacher of 7-A grade in SMPN 1 Tuban had applied various classroom strategies and activities to enhance the students' participation. According to Hoover (2003) there were four instructional strategies and various classroom activities in them. They are whole-class strategies with lecture, discussion, teacher demonstrations, and providing directions as the classroom activities. The second was small-group strategies with project groupings, cooperative learning, and collaborative learning. Then the third was working in pairs with student partnerships, and random pairing as the activities. And the last was working as

individual contained independent seatwork, computer-assisted instruction, learning centers and interactive bulletin boards, and working with manipulatives.

In the previous research by Jumali (2012) showed that the teacher used to conduct classroom activities in three parts of teaching, they were pre-teaching, whilts-teaching, and post-teaching. The teacher also used to use English and Bahasa in explaining the material in order the students could understand well, so this research discussed about teacher's classroom management in conducting classroom activities commonly.

b. The Types of Seating Arrangements Implemented in the Classroom to Enhance Students' Participation in English Class and Its Effect on Students

There were three types of seating arrangements appropriate with the classroom activities that the teacher applied in English classroom in twice meetings:

1) Traditional Seating Arrangement (Orderly Rows)

In traditional seating arrangement, the classroom contained eight straight rows, each contained four to five chairs equidistant from each other. Students worked as a whole group. The teacher applied this seating model in two classroom activities. The first was lecture in the beginning of the lesson. This seating model was appropriate with the activity that the teacher applied, since it had some advantages. Lecture became easier since it enabled the teacher to maintain eye contact with the people she was talking to and placed the primary interaction focus in the classroom on the teacher.

The second activity that was still conducted in this seating model was individual task. The teacher gave the students a task that had to be done individually. It was also appropriate both this activity and the seating model, since the teacher was also easier to walk at the back of the class to control the classroom or help the students who needed help, the students could be focused on a task at the same time, the whole class got the same message, they could concentrate in doing their own tasks because it minimized student-student interaction. Jeremy Harmer (2012: 162) proposed that there are considerable advantages to orderly row seating. The teacher has a clear view of all the students and the students can all see the teacher. It also minimized interaction between student-student, because there was space each student to another. It made them could focus to the teacher and material.

2) **Horseshoe Arrangement**

Horseshoe or semi-circular arrangement was just implemented once by the teacher. It was implemented in having monologue activity. This seating model was also appropriate with the activity, since the students could all see and listen the teacher who was in front of the class or their friend who delivered the monologue task. They also could interact with their friends who were beside them. And the teacher was also easier to see the students and control them. McCorskey and McVetta (1978) proposed that this arrangement would be the best if both student- student and student-teacher interaction are important to the learning in the class.

3) **Modular Arrangement or Separate Tables**

Modular arrangement or separate table was the most frequent seating model that the teacher implemented in the classroom. Four classroom activities held on this seating model, they were project groupings, discussion, presentation, and student partnership. It allowed the students working as a whole class, in groups or in pairs. The teacher also could walk around checking the students' work and helping out if they were having difficulties. With this seating model, groupwork was easy to arrange.

The teacher could mix the students into heterogeneous ability group by choosing group members randomly and deviding each task for each group member, so all group members could participate. In this seating model, the student could interact with other partners in group intimately, so it permitted maximum interaction among those groups while minimizing the interference of one group with another. With horseshoe and circle seating, the classroom is more intimate place and the potential for students to share feelings and information through talking, eye contact, or expressive body movement (eyebrow-raising, shoulder-shrugging, etc) is far greater than they are sitting in rows, one behind the other, stated by Harmer (2012: 163).

From the finding also could be concluded that the teacher had applied various types of seating arrangements. Based on Jeremy Harmer (2012), there were four types of seating arrangements, they were the most common one, traditional arrangement and the others were horseshoe arrangement, circle arrangement, and modular arrangement or separate tables. But, the teacher here only implemented three types of seating arrangements, they were traditional arrangement, horseshoe arrangement, and modular

arrangement or separate tables, because it was matched with the classroom condition and activities. Circle arrangement was not appropriate to implement because it is for a classroom with small number of students. It was opposite with 7-A grade. It had a large number of students.

In the previous research by Safa Zerine (2009) showed that sometimes teacher changed and set students' seating arrangements because of some goals, for examples she placed students in one tables who needs teacher's help so frequently, so it became easy for the teacher to work with all the students who needed help so frequently at the same time. The teacher also placed the desruptive students in isolated seats in order to maintain discipline. Those all to make the teacher works easier.

c. The Students' Responses toward the Teacher's Classroom Management

The researchers gained the data of students' responses from interview and the finding above showed that the students felt comfortable when the teacher changed the seating arrangement in every different instructional strategies and classroom activities. It was because they felt the advantages of those seating models on those classroom activities. Other reason was most of them came from nonremovable seats background, so what they had got about various seating arrangement from SMPN 1 Tuban recently could gave them new view and experience. So that, they became more active to participate.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion of this research has been drawn based on the result of the data analysis. The conclusion has been written to answer the problem chosen. The result as follows:

a. The Classroom Activities to Enhance the Students' Participation

In this two-meeting research, the teacher implemented four instructional strategies that included seven classroom activities to enhance the students' participation, they were lecture in whole-class strategies; project groupings, group discussion, and presentation in small-group strategies; student partnerships in working in pairs; and the last were individual task and having monologue in working as individual. So, it can be concluded that the teacher applied various classroom activities to enhance the students' participation in English class.

b. Types of Seating Arrangements Implemented in the Classroom to Enhance Students' Participation in English Class and Its Effect on Students

The teacher also implemented three types of seating arrangement based on the classroom activities and classroom condition, they were traditional arrangement to do lecture and individual task, horseshoe arrangement to do having monologue activity, and modular arrangement or separate tables to do student partnerships, project groupings, group discussion, and presentation. It can be concluded that the teacher could match appropriate seating arrangements and classroom activities because it enabled the students to keep focus, interact between student-student, student-teacher, and among group easily and participate well.

c. The Students' Responses toward the Teacher's Classroom Management

From the result of the interview in finding above, it can be concluded that the change of seating arrangements based on the classroom activities, could make the students felt comfortable, because they could feel the advantages.

From the description above, it could be concluded that the teacher could enhance the students' participation in English class by implementing various classroom activities on various types of seating arrangement

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